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Middle East:
Analytic Perspective

Currents Favor Saddam []

Stalemate in the peace process, growing Arab dissatisfaction with sanctions against Iraq, and Arab anger over the US military strike in Sudan have added momentum to regional trends benefiting Saddam. Regional states—wagering that sanctions will soon end—are positioning themselves to gain from Iraq's anticipated reemergence as a viable player in the region. []

Arabs Stress Peace Process []

The failure of Israeli-Palestinian talks to yield agreement on a further Israeli troop withdrawal from the West Bank has hardened Arab attitudes toward Israel. Gulf Cooperation Council foreign ministers last month agreed to boycott future Middle East–North Africa summits that Israel attends, and Arab states are preparing to press for strong statements on the peace process at the UN General Assembly beginning today in New York and at the Arab League ministerial that began last week in Cairo []

[]
— Egypt's joining with France last week to repeat a call for convening a second Middle East peace conference underscores mounting Arab disillusionment with the US-brokered talks.
[]

Arab perceptions that the US enforces UN Security Council resolutions against Iraq while shielding Israel from similar pressure on the peace process persist. This undermines Arab willingness to join a consensus to compel Iraqi compliance with UN demands. []

[] []
— The US military strike last month against the al-Shifa plant in Sudan has fueled Arab perceptions of US hostility toward Muslims, increasing the political risk to US allies of siding with Washington to renew pressure against Saddam. []